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ABSTRACT

The Blue Ribbon Committee at Utah State University (USU) was charged with the study of information systems, telecommunications, and library services at the university, and challenged to look for ways to better manage, coordinate, and capitalize on both opportunity and investment in telecommunication and information technology and resources. The committee communicated with a number of universities across the country and found that four basic issues were common with each of the institutions: (1) a need for university-wide central leadership with respect to telecommunication; (2) a need for increased integration of telecommunication and information technologies and resources; (3) a need to capitalize on the reality of limited resources and develop and maintain common communication protocols; and (4) a need to establish an organization capable of planning for the future and reacting to the rapid changes in technology. Telephone interviews with other universities and meetings with educational administrators provided needed background information as well as information on the learning resources and telecommunications needs of the university's on and off campus programs. This report briefly reports on the interviews with other universities and meetings with the USU deans, the President's Council, and faculty, staff, and students. It then traces the development of planning notes and provides a detailed description of the proposed organizational structure that emerged from the study, including two figures depicting the proposed structure and reporting lines and interactions among and between deans and vice presidents. One of the major recommendations is that the Director of Merrill Library and the Learning Resources Program be appointed the Dean of Learning Resources and given the added responsibilities for the Computer Services, Telephone Services, Electronic Distance Education Engineering and Distance Education Instructional Development. It is noted that this central organizational structure would place all telecommunication units in the same administrative line. (DB)

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Report of the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Study of Information Systems, Telecommunications and Library Services at Utah State University

"Try to imagine running an airline in today's world without computers, word–processors, and advanced tele–communications networks. Then realize that, in the twenty–first century, running an educational program without electronic media, computers, and tele–educational techniques would be perhaps even more difficult. In short, it will be virtually impossible." Pelton (1990)

April 29, 1991
Utah State University
Logan, Utah

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Introduction

By memorandum dated May 21, 1990, Provost Karen W. Morse appointed a Blue Ribbon Committee for the study of Information Systems, Telecommunications, and Library Services at Utah State University. The need for the committee and the committee's charge was stated by Provost Morse as follows:

> *"Telecommunications is rapidly becoming a significant vehicle for the University to receive and disseminate course material and information both on and beyond our campus. The complexity and changes that have taken place in telecommunications in recent years suggest that a complete review of USU information systems, telecommunications, and library services is appropriate. Presently, a variety of University committees and individual units have responsibility for different areas of telecommunications and information dissemination (e.g., MLLRP, Cooperative Extension, Life-Span Learning, etc.). The relationship and interaction between various units need to be clarified and an efficient operable and cost effective system established...*
>
> *... Approximately four years ago a telecommunications committee was appointed to resolve technical requirements (e.g., telephone lines, computer tie-ins, etc.) of on-campus telecommunications. In March, 1989, President Cazier appointed an Electronic Distance Education Policy Board to provide coordination and oversight of all aspects of off-campus telecommunications education. The MLLRP organization, based on the Smellie report (1970), has had a variety of responsibilities involving printing services, telecommunications, and library services.*
>
> *This new blue-ribbon committee is charged to thoroughly examine a number of different areas. All aspects of telecommunications, including the most effective administration and responsibilities of different units with various functions, should be examined. It is important to maintain the momentum already established by the EDE Committee and the technical telecommunications committee but to clarify roles and determine how to best integrate functions. Another major need for this new committee will be to achieve clear delineation of the Library and Learning Resources Program to telecommunications and other units involved in telecommunications. The overall structuring of the Library should also be examined."*

A complete copy of the memorandum from Provost Morse and a list of the committee membership are included in Appendix A of this report.

The charge given the Blue Ribbon Committee is being repeated in industry, business, and higher education throughout the country. Organizations of all types are

looking for ways to better manage, coordinate, and capitalize on both opportunity and investment in telecommunication and information technology and resources. The Committee found, as it communicated with a number of universities across the country, that the basic issues assigned to the Blue Ribbon Committee to explore were common with each institution. Those similarities included:

- a need for university–wide central leadership with respect to telecommunication;
- a need for increased integration of telecommunication and information technologies and resources in order to best meet the mission of the institution;
- a need to capitalize on the reality of limited resources and develop and maintain common communication protocols;
- a need to establish an organization capable of planning for the future and reacting to the rapid changes in technology.

Summary of Conclusions

This report presents the results of the Blue Ribbon Committee's study. A new organizational structure that places all telecommunication units in the same administrative line is strongly recommended. Although it does significantly alter the current structure, the proposed organization **does not** require a new administrative position and associated staff. There is a sense of urgency in moving toward this new administrative structure and the Committee recommends adoption by July 1, 1991.

Description of the Study

The committee began its activities on July 27, 1990. Considerable effort was given to obtaining background information and identifying the learning resources and telecommunications needs of USU's on campus and off campus programs. This background and needs information was obtained by the activities described below.

Presentations to the Committee. Formal presentations were made to the Committee by the following individuals:

• Don Smellie	Chair of the 1970 committee that recommended the original MLLRP organization
• Glenn Wilde	Acting Director of MLLRP
• Rob Russon	Director of Telecommunications

•	Max Peterson	Director of the Library
•	Rex Tueller	Dean of Continuing Education
•	Karl Fugal	Director of Computer Services
•	Ellen Schunk	Acting Director of Telephone Services
•	Paul Wheeler	Member of the University Telecommunication Committee
•	Karen Morse	Utah State University Provost

Materiai that was presented to the committee by these individuals is included as Appendix B of this report.

Telephone Interviews with Other Universities. Telephone interviews with representatives from other universities were conducted by members of the Committee. Ten universities with extensive telecommunication activities were selected and contacted. Prior to the telephone interview the Provost of each university was notified by letter from Provost Morse that one or two members of the Blue Ribbon Committee would be contacting them regarding their telecommunications, library and learning resources programs at their university. The list of universities that were contacted, the letter of introduction from Provost Morse, the questions that were asked in the telephone interviews and selected responses are included as Appendix C of this report.

Meeting with the Deans. The committee met with the Deans to describe the Committee's charge and activities and to obtain input directly from them. In addition to this group meeting, various committee members met individually with Deans. Written responses are presented in Appendix D.

Meeting with the President's Council. After obtaining background and needs information, three alternative organizational charts were developed. These preliminary charts were presented to the President's Council. Copies of written responses are included as Appendix D of this report.

Open Meeting with Faculty, Staff and Students. A progress report of the Committee's activities was presented to an open meeting of the faculty, staff and students. The alternative plans that were being discussed were presented and feedback was obtained.

Development of Planning Notes

Rapid growth of telecommunications technology in the 1980's contributed to a lack of coordination between various telecommunications units not only at USU but on other

campuses throughout the country. The increased technological capability of the 80's spawned the ability and the need to deliver educational programs via the electronic media. The following developments occurred at USU:

- COMNET developed through the Lifespan Learning program and somewhat independent of USU's telecommunication department. COMNET was successful and grew rapidly.

- Intermountain Community Learning and Information Services (ICLIS) was funded through a Kellogg Grant.

- The computer center grew from an IBM 1620 with punch card I/O in the 1960's to its current configuration that provides networking services and distributed computer laboratories.

- A Fiber Optics backbone was installed by Computer Services.

- PC computers and workstations became available to individual departments.

- USU's PBX telephone switch became outdated and approached a point where it would not be possible to have continued maintenance.

As the various programs and needs developed and grew it became clear by about 1983 that there was an urgent need to coordinate all telecommunication activities. The organization where the various telecommunication related units reported to different central administration officers was not workable. The telecommunications policy committee in a report dated April 1984, recommended changing the reporting lines so that all telecommunication units would report to the same office. This recommendation was echoed by the Academic Support Committee for Strategic Planning in June 1989. Neither of these recommendations were adopted.

This history was central to the development of the Blue Ribbon Committee's recommendations and were reflected in the planning notes that were used to guide the development of a proposed organizational structure. The planning notes are summarized below.

- All telecommunication elements must be coordinated to increase campus wide efficiency.

- Computer services, telephone services and Radio/TV will probably remain independent as far as day to day operations, but administrative control may change.

- Computer Services must continue to meet the needs of both the academic and administrative functions of the University, and must anticipate as much as possible the potential changes of the next decade.

- Meeting the missions of the University must drive technological applications and the organizational structure.

- Technological needs of the library continue to increase exponentially.

- Learning resources programs must meet many of the needs of the academic, research and extension missions of the University.

- All colleges are likely to and should independently develop and meet some of their own microcomputer and workstation needs.

- All learning resources programs should report through administrative lines to the Provost.

- All "for credit" distance education programs should report through administrative lines to the Provost as mandated by the Board of Regents.

- All EDE activities must be coordinated with each other (especially engineering and equipment) and must meet the needs of **both on-campus and off-campus** academic, research and extension programs.

Proposed Organizational Structure

After considering the background information and the telecommunication needs of the University, the Blue Ribbon Committee recognized the need for a central advocate for telecommunications. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the adoption of the organizational structure shown in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 represents the proposed structure and reporting lines. It is a "conventional" organizational chart. This type of chart does not allow all of the interactions to be depicted which actually occur at the University. For example, the Dean of the College of Education coordinates with the Vice Presidents for Extension, Research, Student Relations, and Administrative Affairs in addition to the Deans of Continuing Education and the Graduate School.

Figure 2 depicts the interactions among and between Deans and Vice Presidents. It is perhaps a more accurate reflection of how the University presently operates and can operate with the proposed structure. The University uses the position of dean to refer to more than an academic disciplinary leader. The Deans of Continuing Education and the School of Graduate Studies and the Director of the Merrill Library and Learning Resources Program currently serve all colleges in their disciplinary efforts. Using this current operating logic, the Committee recommends that the title of the Director of the Merrill Library and the Learning Resources Program (MLLRP) be changed to Dean of Learning Resources and be given the added responsibilities for the Computer Services, Telephone Services, Electronic Distance Education Engineering and Distance Education

Instructural Development. The Dean of Learning Resources will report to the Provost and will also coordinate with the Vice Presidents, just as other deans currently do.

The Committee sees rapid growth in electronic delivery of education and in interactive learning technologies. The proposed changes create a unified organization that will assist academic units in their teaching, research, and extension missions. This structure represents the interactions and attributes the Committee felt were the most important in meeting the items identified in the planning notes.

- All telecommunication units (Computer Services, Telephone Services, EDE, and Telecommunications) report through the Dean of Learning Resources to the Provost. These units are all learning resources and as such must be coordinated with academic programs.

- The Dean of Learning Resources is at an administrative level equal to the existing Deans and sits in council with them concerning teaching, research and extension matters.

- The Dean of Learning Resources serves in a facilitating capacity to the academic Deans in the same way that the Dean of Continuing Education and the Dean of the Graduate School serve as facilitators to the academic Deans as they carry out the teaching, research, and extension programs of the University.

- The Director of Telephone Services must report to the Dean of Learning Resources because the telephone is playing an increasing and changing role in delivery of educational programs and data; and this role must be coordinated in a formal way with the other telecommunication units. Telephone Services can be properly thought of as another campus network.

- The Director of Computer Services must report to the Dean of Learning Resources because the Computer Center is playing an increasing and changing role in the delivery of educational programs and data and this role must be coordinated in a formal way with other telecommunications units.

- Electronic Distance Education (EDE) delivery systems are resources for learning. As such, EDE delivery systems (engineering), must be coordinated under the Dean of Learning Resources. This includes the delivery systems and the engineering aspects now associated with COMNET and all other existing and future EDE systems. COMNET as a unit will remain in Continuing Education and focus on its programmatic functions.

- The functions of marketing and programming satellite educational activities currently performed by Telecommunication Services should move to Continuing Education. These functions are more in keeping with those

performed by Continuing Education. Learning Resources through Telecommunications will continue technical support for these activities.

- Program control resides with the academic units, such as colleges, departments, Cooperative Extension and research units that sponsor distance education activities. For example, such units are responsible for program development design and evaluation. Learning Resources is a service provided to such units to assist them in performing their various university missions and delivering educational programs.

- Virtually all aspects of university life will soon be affected by electronic delivery systems and, therefore, those systems must be coordinated under a single unit for both on–campus and off–campus functions.

- The proposed structure is a recognition of the revolution occurring in technology and the promise it holds for the University. To attempt to accommodate the information explosion and technology revolution with a traditional structure inherited from the 1970's would place USU at a disadvantage.

It is the opinion of the Blue Ribbon Committee that the proposed organizational structure will lead to better coordination of Learning Resource activities and to a more efficient use of resources. Flexibility must be maintained in order to accommodate new academic and extension programs. For example, AgSat was developed by the College of Agriculture with strong financial support from both the Vice Presidents of Extension and Research. The Telecommunications Department was called upon to provide day to day technical support for AgSat. This day to day support will continue and the governing of AgSat will be as presently constituted. The role of Life Span Learning regarding AgSat programs will be worked out with AgSat's governing board. The ability to workout these kinds of arrangements will continue under the new structure with Learning Resources playing a facilitating or service role.

The responsibilities of the Dean of Learning Resources are not in any way similar to service organizations such as Physical Plant. It is critical, in our opinion, that these learning resources be closely tied to the academic programs (including teaching, research, and extension) and that they can best be coordinated through a Dean. Learning resources include data, video, communications, and other proven forms of information such as journals and books. These resources are central to teaching, research, and extension.

Note that the library is included under the Dean of Learning Resources in Figure 1. This is important at this time of technology expansion because the library must significantly increase the extent to which it utilizes electronic information systems. Universities can no longer afford to accumulate "hard copy" of all new books and journals. Having the library in the same organization with the telecommunications units will hopefully "jump start" the library into this area. Access to these forms of information must be as free to the campus community as other forms of information in the library are

currently. Any additional cost increases must be absorbed by the University in general. At some time in the future the administration may wish to separate the library as an independent unit with a Dean of Libraries. However, we do not recommend this action at this time.

The following points should also be considered.

- Although the Director of Telephone Services will report to the Dean of Learning Resources, he or she will continue to operate the unit on a cost recovery basis and will continue to deal with the Vice President of Administrative Affairs regarding business matters.

- Although the Director of Computer Services will report to the Dean of Learning Resources, he or she will continue to provide services to administrative and student activity units of the University at current levels and will continue to coordinate with the Vice President for Research.

- Budgets associated with the existing functions must follow the functions as they are moved within the University organization.

- The Copy Center should remain under the Dean of Learning Resources because of the copyright services that have been established by the current MLLRP organization. However, the Committee recommends reconsidering whether or not USU should continue to maintain a full Printing Service as a campus unit.

- All existing units in the current MLLRP will be administered by the Dean of Learning Resources unless otherwise specified.

- The Committee has intentionally avoided efforts to micro–manage the proposed organization, rather it leaves the many required decisions to those charged with new responsibilities. For example, the Committee heard from various sources about the "TA" problem at some off–campus distance education sites. The Committee determined this problem is best solved between the Deans of Continuing Education and Learning Resources. Also, some have expressed concern regarding transfer of equipment. The Committee appreciates that there are legal limitations to such actions and therefore leaves these kinds of decisions to those best informed. The proposal does not specify the many "linkages" needed for the effective operation of a unit.

- Advisory committees now in place may remain and continue to give guidance to appropriate units. As the proposed organization is implemented, the need to add or change advisory committees may develop.

- The Committee reccgnizes that the University is in a time of transition with administrative officers' positions open or soon to be opened. Therefore, the Committee recommends that changes be effected as soon as administratively possible. The Committee further feels that these changes will be best implemented by the current administrators who understand the problems and situations that brought the Blue Ribbon Committee into existence.

- The budget for Learning Resources must be viewed as funding a campus–wide resource. The Vice Presidents for Extension, Research, and Administrative Affairs should continue to support these services as they have in the past. The Dean of Learning Resources must coordinate with these Vice Presidents and the areas which they represent.

Conclusions

I. After careful consideration of all of the input and information received, the Blue Ribbon Committee strongly recommends the adoption of the organization structure shown in Figure 1. The proposed organization does not create any new positions. It does redistribute administrative lines. The University cannot afford to wait in setting up this organization and the committee, therefore, recommends that it be officially put in place by July 1, 1991.

II. This new organization is capable of, and charged with the mission of providing University–wide leadership in:

- facilitating the use, development and implementation of telecommunication and information technologies and resources which support the University's needs;

- providing and nurturing the services necessary to enable the University community to apply telecommunication and information technologies and resources to its needs;

- supporting the applications of such telecommunication and information technologies, resources and services in those areas where central support is most effective across the spectrum of University requirements;

- coordinating the definition and support of appropriate policies, plans, standards, and controls to provide an effective foundation and framework for innovation, development, implementation and use of telecommunication and information technologies and resources throughout the University.

Blue Ribbon Committee Report

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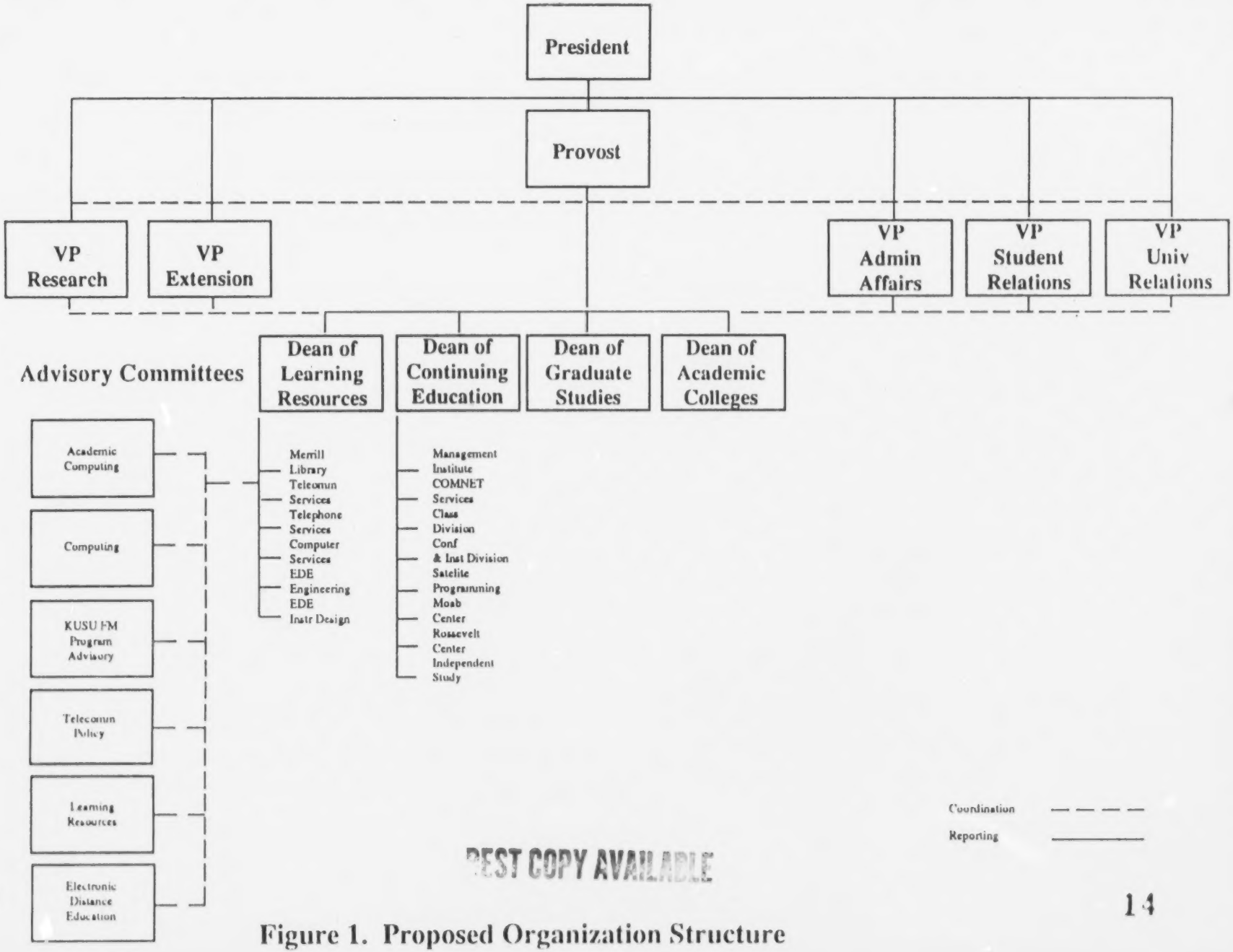

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Figure 1. Proposed Organization Structure

Figure 2. Representation of Deans' and Vice Presidents' Interactions